



The President's Daily Brief

13 May 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Communists continue to press Cambodian Government forces in border provinces. (Page 1)

Moscow's gesture of support for Sihanouk yesterday fell short of diplomatic recognition of his newly formed government. (Page 2)

Allied operations in Cambodia are delaying North Vietnamese infiltration groups heading for the South. (Page 3)

Some enemy units in South Vietnam plan additional activity in areas where allied units have been diverted to the Cambodian front. (Page 4)

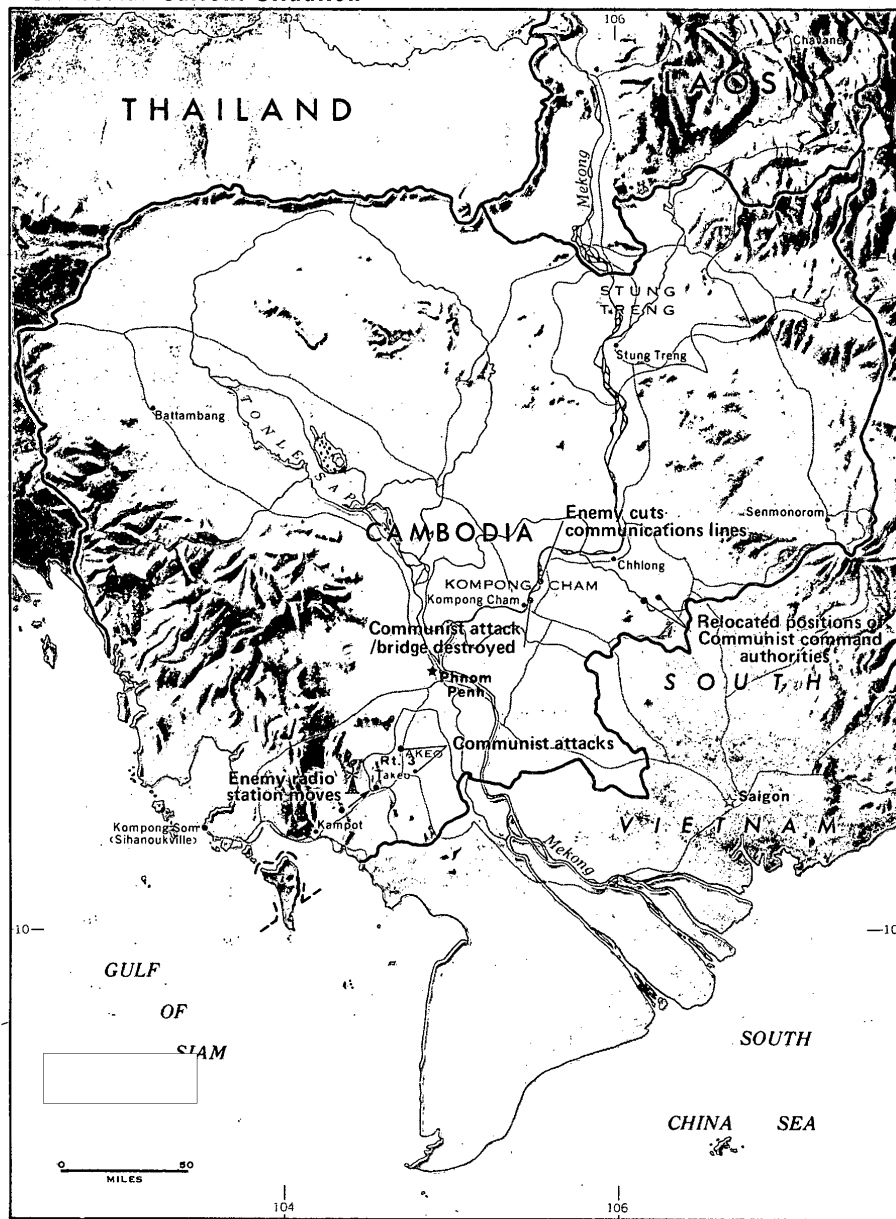
Tel Aviv's thrust into southern Lebanon may temporarily deter fedayeen activity but in the longer run is likely to lead to a further deterioration of the situation. (Page 5)

An installation under construction in northeastern China may be a surface-to-surface missile site. (Page 6)

The military situation in Laos is noted on Page 6.

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

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[REDACTED] An estimated 100 Vietnamese Communist troops have attacked a government force across the river from the town and have destroyed a nearby bridge. The Communists have also blocked a section of a road in the area on the east bank of the Mekong.

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In the south, Communist forces are still besieging the capital of Takeo Province. An estimated 700 enemy troops ambushed a four-truck government convoy on Route 3 just north of Takeo on 11 May. In addition, communications intelligence discloses that a radio station associated with the military arm of COSVN is now located about 15 miles southwest of Takeo.

This is the deepest penetration of such a facility into this province to date. The station was located in the Takeo Province - South Vietnam border area on 1 May.

Along the eastern part of the border, top-level Communist command authorities and some main force combat units continue to pull back farther into Cambodia. Many are nearing the announced 21-mile limit of US penetration and could be heading for temporary sanctuary deeper within the country.

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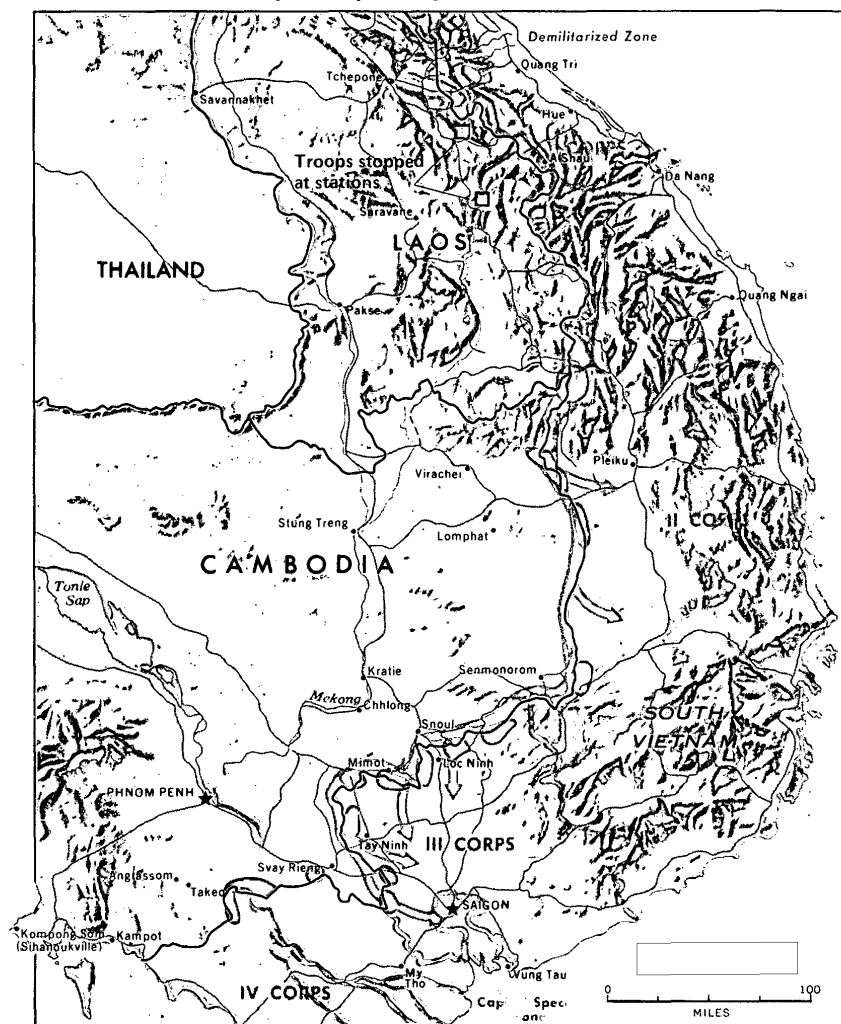
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USSR-CAMBODIA

Premier Kosygin's telegram yesterday to Sihanouk is the first direct gesture of support that the Prince has received from the USSR. It falls well short, however, of the full diplomatic recognition already extended by Hanoi and Peking to Sihanouk's "Royal Government of National Union." Kosygin's message was addressed to "Mr." Norodom Sihanouk, and it congratulates him not on the formation of his government-in-exile, but on the "United Front" which he established soon after his ouster.

Moscow's failure to recognize Sihanouk's "government" reflects Soviet caution and uncertainty about the orientation and prospects for success of a Sihanouk-led liberation movement. Moscow probably felt compelled to make this demonstration of support for Sihanouk to counter Chinese influence on Indochina developments. Kosygin's telegram bears the mark of a holding operation while the Soviets sort out all the implications of the Indochina situation, but it will be difficult for the USSR to stay out of step with Hanoi for long on a policy matter of this importance. Sihanouk quickly accepted the sign of Soviet support but made it clear in a telegram to Kosygin that he was formally requesting official recognition of his government-in-exile.

NVA Infiltration Troops Temporarily Halted



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VC/NVA base area along Cambodian border

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NORTH VIETNAM

Allied operations in Cambodia are plugging the infiltration pipeline to South Vietnam. In intercepted messages of 8 and 9 May, Hanoi ordered at least 19 infiltration groups, currently located at two major stopover stations in the Lao panhandle, not to continue south. The groups are small, and the total number of personnel involved is around 500. Infiltration authorities at the stations are being told to guarantee security for the groups and to keep them fit and ready to move out when ordered.

The delay unquestionably is due to allied operations in Cambodia. All the halted groups are slated for assignment in either the III or the IV corps areas of South Vietnam. Their route normally would take them through the area of allied operations in Cambodia.

Other infiltration groups headed for southern South Vietnam probably are also being affected, although there is no evidence of this as yet in intercepts. About 12,000 North Vietnamese replacement troops were scheduled to arrive in the III and IV corps areas during May, June, and July. Heavy losses of equipment in Cambodian base areas are likely to give the enemy further reason to delay the arrival of substantial numbers of new troops.

* * *

Hanoi is moving some of its MIG jet fighters now stationed in China back to North Vietnam. Thus far, eight MIG-21s and six MIG-19s have arrived at Yen Bai airfield northwest of Hanoi. These deployments may reflect Hanoi's apprehension over the possibility of renewed US bombing of the North. They will augment an already substantial fighter force--some 60 MIG-21s and ten MIG-19s--based in North Vietnam.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Some Communist units within South Vietnam are planning offensive operations to take advantage of the diversion of allied forces to the Cambodian front. Numerous references to the deployment of allied forces to the Cambodian border have cropped up in recent intercepts and documents. In many cases, enemy units were directed to try to strike in areas where allied strength has been cut back.

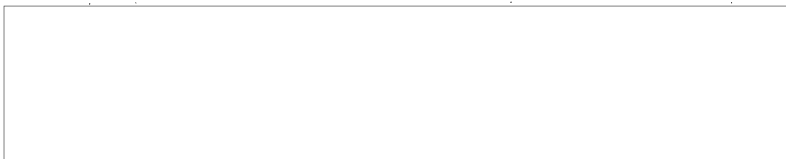
We cannot judge how great an effort the Communists can put together in the immediate future, as this will depend on the readiness of various units and other local conditions. The Communists nevertheless are probably anxious to get an operation of some sort going, if not one severe enough to force the early withdrawal of US or South Vietnamese troops from the border regions, then at least one strong enough to score some tactical success against lightly defended areas.

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LEBANON-ISRAEL

In contrast to fedayeen claims of heavy fighting and high casualties, Israeli officials seem to be trying to depict their day-long "combing operation" in southern Lebanon as limited. They describe it as a "screening" action designed to capture fedayeen and to destroy their bases. Tel Aviv has given no figures of guerrillas killed and says only that Israeli forces took 11 prisoners and destroyed some 40 buildings and ten vehicles, while suffering 11 wounded themselves. It also warns that much stronger ripostes are in the offing if fedayeen attacks from Lebanon continue.

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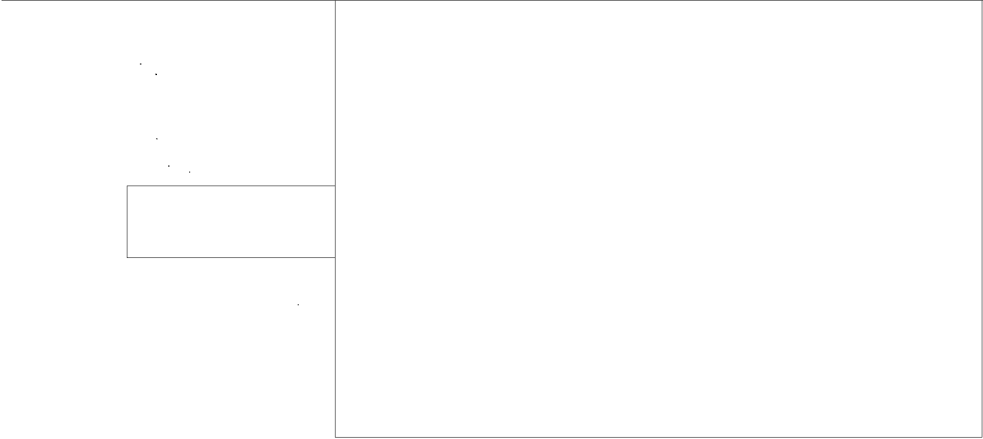
With the Lebanese cabinet delicately balanced between pro- and anti-fedayeen factions, the Lebanese Army's communiqués may have been an attempt to head off public criticism of the government for not acting forcefully enough against the Israelis. It is possible, however, that a fedayeen-led outcry may still bring down the cabinet. Ambassador Porter believes that in any case the Lebanese public is likely to blame the US for not stopping the attack and that some groups may even accuse the US of complicity with Tel Aviv.

Over the longer term, events in Lebanon are likely to parallel the developments of the past few years in Jordan. The Israeli attack is unlikely to deter further fedayeen incursions into Israel for long. Fearful of initiating yet another government-fedayeen confrontation with its accompanying political problems, Beirut probably will not attempt any strong measures of its own to control the fedayeen. This in turn is likely to lead to further Israeli air and ground strikes against fedayeen concentrations in Lebanon.

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NOTES

Communist China: Satellite photography shows that an installation under construction since 1967 at I-cho-mao in northeastern China may be a surface-to-surface missile site.

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Laos: Communist military activity continues to focus on the Bolovens Plateau. The enemy has succeeded in dispersing government guerrillas from a key position located some ten miles northwest of the provincial capital of Attopeu. The guerrillas are now regrouping in an effort to retake it. In the north, there have been only a few minor clashes in the Long Tieng area.

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